

Week Ending Friday, April 13, 2007

The President's Radio Address

April 7, 2007

Good morning. This week, people around the world celebrate Passover and Easter. These holy days remind us of the presence of a loving God who delivers His people from oppression and offers a love more powerful than death. We take joy in spending this special time with family and friends, and we give thanks for the many blessings in our lives.

One of our greatest blessings as Americans is that we have brave citizens who step forward to defend us. Every man or woman who wears our Nation's uniform is a volunteer, a patriot who has made the noble decision to serve a cause larger than self. This week-end, many of our service men and women are celebrating the holidays far from home. They are separated from their families by great distances, but they are always close in our thoughts. And this Passover and Easter, I ask you to keep them in your prayers.

Our men and women in uniform deserve the gratitude of every American. And from their elected leaders, they deserve something more: the funds, resources, and equipment they need to do their jobs.

Sixty-one days have passed since I sent Congress an emergency war spending bill to provide the funds our troops urgently need. But instead of approving that vital funding, Democrats in Congress have spent the past 61 days working to pass legislation that would substitute the judgment of politicians in Washington for the judgment of our generals in the field.

In both the House and Senate, Democratic majorities have passed bills that would impose restrictions on our military commanders, set an arbitrary date for withdrawal from Iraq, and fund domestic spending that has nothing to do with the war. The Democrats who passed these bills know that I will veto either version if it reaches my desk, and they know my veto will be sustained. Yet they

continue to pursue the legislation. And now the process is on hold for 2 weeks, until the full Congress returns to session.

I recognize that Democrats are trying to show their current opposition to the war in Iraq. They see the emergency war spending bill as a chance to make that statement. Yet for our men and women in uniform, this emergency war spending bill is not a political statement; it is a source of critical funding that has a direct impact on their daily lives.

When Congress does not fund our troops on the frontlines, our military is forced to make cuts in other areas to cover the shortfall. Military leaders have warned Congress about this problem. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Pete Pace, recently testified that if Congress fails to pass a bill I can sign by mid-April, the Army will be forced to consider cutting back on training, equipment repair, and quality of life initiatives for our Guard and Reserve forces. In a letter to Congress, Army Chief of Staff Pete Schoomaker put it this way: "Without approval of the supplemental funds in April, we will be forced to take increasingly draconian measures, which will impact Army readiness and impose hardships on our soldiers and their families."

If Congress fails to pass a bill I can sign by mid-May, the problems grow even more acute. The Army will be forced to consider slowing or even freezing funding for depots where pivotal equipment is repaired, delaying or curtailing the training of some active duty forces, and delaying the formation of new brigade combat teams. The bottom line is that Congress's failure to fund our troops will mean that some of our military families could wait longer for their loved ones to return from the frontlines, and others could see their loved ones headed back to war sooner than they need to. That is unacceptable to me, and I believe it is unacceptable to the American people.

The full Congress will not be back from spring vacation until the week of April 16th. That means the soonest the House and Senate could get a bill to my desk will be sometime late this month, after the adverse consequences for our troops and their families have already begun. For our troops, the clock is ticking. If the Democrats continue to insist on making a political statement, they should send me their bill as soon as possible. I will veto it, and then Congress can go to work on a good bill that gives our troops the funds they need, without strings and without further delay.

We have our differences in Washington, DC, but our troops should not be caught in the middle. All who serve in elected office have a solemn responsibility to provide for our men and women in uniform. We need to put partisan politics aside and do our duty to those who defend us.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:20 a.m. on April 6 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 6 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to Reporters at Fort Hood, Texas

April 8, 2007

Easter

The President. Laura and I just had the honor of celebrating Easter Sunday with members of our Armed Forces. I had a chance to reflect on the great sacrifice that our military and their families are making. I prayed for their safety; I prayed for their strength and comfort; and I prayed for peace.

This is a joyous day for many people around the world, and it's a day for us to reflect on the many blessings in our lives. And we thank the General and the troops at Fort Hood for welcoming me and Laura, and Mother and Dad, and my mother-in-law. We wish all Americans a peaceful weekend, and we wish our troops all the very best.

Thank you.

The First Lady. Happy Easter.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at the 13th Sustainment Command Chapel.

Remarks During a Tour of the Border and an Exchange With Reporters in Yuma, Arizona

April 9, 2007

The President. You know, it's interesting; this is the spot I came to in May of 2006. Colburn told me then that we were in the process of developing a modernization strategy. None of this existed prior to my arrival in May. And they told me they were developing a strategy that would prevent people from charging across to try to get to the neighborhood over here. And that strategy has been implemented.

It is a combination of roads, lighting, and fencing, all aiming at making sure that we have a border that's protected. And it's amazing the progress that's been made. And we have come back to this spot because it's where I was the last time. And I was most impressed by your strategy, even more impressed by the fact that it's now being implemented. And the men have reported that the number of arrests are down, which is an indication that fewer people are trying to cross the border at this part of—along the border. And so we're making some pretty good progress.

And the reason we've come here is to show the American people that the plan that we've announced is now being implemented. And there is still more work to be done, but, nevertheless, a lot of progress is being made. I'm going to talk a little bit later about making sure that we complete the strategy by having a comprehensive immigration bill. I will save my words until then. But in the meantime, I wanted you to see the progress—see firsthand the progress that we're making here on the border.

Anyway, thank you for your time.

U.S. Border Patrol

Q. What most impresses you, Mr. President?

The President. The hard work being done.